

Amendments to the Specification:

Amend paragraph [0023] as follows:

[0023] Outer surface 16 is treated with a basic fluid exemplified by the depicted downwardly directed ~~arrows—18~~ arrows 17. The basic treating fluid might be liquid, gaseous, or a combination of liquid and gaseous. In the context of this document, a basic treating fluid which is “liquid” or “gaseous” constitutes at least 95% of such phase. Regardless, in one preferred implementation, the basic treating fluid has a pH of at least 8.5, and more preferably a pH of at least 10.5. By way of example only, exemplary preferred basic treating fluids include tetramethyl ammonium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide, ammonium fluoride, and aqueous alkylamine fluids. Specific exemplary alkyl amines include ethylamine, cyclohexylamine, and methylbutylamine. Of course, various combinations or mixtures of the stated, or other materials, might also be employed.

Amend paragraph [0027] as follows:

[0027] In one preferred implementation, outer surface 16 is at least partially dried intermediate the basic fluid treating and the application of positive photoresist, and even more preferably completely dried intermediate the treating and photoresist applying. Further preferably in one preferred embodiment, outer surface 16 is not exposed to any liquid intermediate the basic fluid treating and the application of positive photoresist. For example, and preferably, outer surface 16 is allowed to dry under ambient or elevated temperature conditions without any intervening spraying or even rinsing with deionized water over outer surface 16. Alternately but less preferred in an aspect of the invention, the outer surface might be treated with other fluids (for example which may be aqueous, non-aqueous, pH neutral, pH below 7, gaseous, liquid, etc.) intermediate the basic fluid treating and the application of photoresist. Further, outer surface 16 might be treated multiple discrete times with the same or different basic fluids. Regardless, treatment of a surface with a basic fluid prior to photoresist application in accordance with the invention might be for any purpose, including for yet to-be-determined purposes, reasons or objectives. An existing purpose might be to consume known or unknown reactants present on the surface being treated which

might otherwise adversely affect ~~same aspect~~ some aspect of the subsequent photoresist processing.